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Air security charge: a tax on a tax

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You know that \$12 Air Traveller Security Charge you pay on every airline flight? Well, you thought it was all to go for improving airport security didn't you?

Truth is, it includes a nice little slush fund for our free-spending Liberal government as well.

When then-finance minister Paul Martin announced the charge in the December 2001 budget, he gave two assurances, that all revenues collected would go to security spending and that the \$12 could be reduced this fall if it was generating more than needed.

Well, here we are seven months later and no sign of a reduction. No surprise there.

But the deceit was that there was never any intention to put more than 93 per cent of the gross towards security.

Yes, that last 7 per cent is GST and every time a Canadian pays the \$12 charge, only \$11.22 goes to security and 78 cents to whatever the government wants to spend it on.

With three million flights a month, that adds up.

This levy is neither a good nor a service: Having been through Parliament and having statutory authority, it is actually a tax and even in this country, the government is not allowed to tax a tax.

But they call it a charge and slap 7 per cent on it.

A tax on a tax, every time you fly. I'm Nigel Hannaford of The Calgary Herald and that's The Last Word.

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